IN 2 MONTHS ... TIME RUNS OUT!

SECRET WARS

NEW AVENGERS®

HICKMAN
TALAJIC
MAGYAR
MARTIN

030

MARVEL

PREVIOUSLY IN NEW AVENGERS

IS WHAT I'M SEEING REAL?

YES, CARETAKER. THE STRUCTURE IS COLLAPSING.

THE ***BUILDERS*** SPENT ONE MILLION YEARS CONSTRUCTING THIS SYSTEM AND IT HAS EXISTED FOR A MILLION BEYOND THAT...

WHO COULD HAVE ***IMAGINED*** IT WOULD END? I HAVE FAILED YOU, BUILDERS. FORGIVE ME.

THE INCURSION WALL IS TWENTY LENGTHS IN FRONT OF US...NO. NO. NO. NO.

IT'S... BLUE. BLUE AND NOT RED.

BLUE IS... MUCH WORSE. BLUE MEANS ***SIDERA MARIS.*** BLUE MEANS ***MAPMAKERS.***

"THEY EVOLVED IN THE MULTIVERSE AND MOVE BETWEEN UNIVERSES AT WILL--DEAD WORLDS FINDING HEALTHY NEW WORLDS TO BE DEVOURED. THEY MAKE MAPS AND ROB THE WHEEL OF THOSE THAT WOULD BE TESTED BY IT.

"YOU HAVE ***NO TIME.***"

HANK, YOU'RE HOME. YOU MADE IT BACK.

BACK HOME. THANK GOD. REED...REED, I FOUND...

RABUM ALAL? THE GREAT DESTROYER? YOU FOUND HIM?

NO. NOT THE DESTROYER. THE...THE ***IVORY KINGS...***

"...THE WHITE LORDS FROM WILD SPACE. ***THE BEYONDERS.***"

S.H.I.E.L.D. AVENGERS

STEVE ROGERS

HAWKEYE

MARIA HILL

WAR MACHINE

INVISIBLE WOMAN

CAPTAIN AMERICA

CAPTAIN MARVEL

THE ILLUMINATI

BEAST

HULK/ DOC GREEN

REED RICHARDS

BLACK BOLT

BLACK PANTHER

CAPTAIN BRITAIN

AMADEUS CHO

IRON MAN

DOCTOR STRANGE

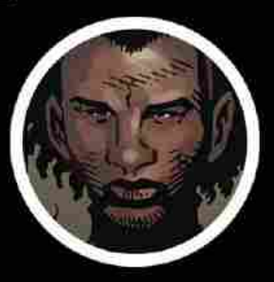
YELLOWJACKET

NEW AVENGERS

SUNSPOT

CANNONBALL

SMASHER


MANIFOLD

BLACK WIDOW

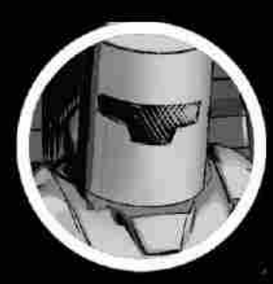
SPIDER-WOMAN

SHANG-CHI

VALIDATOR

POD

ZEBRA KIDS


A.I.M.

MULTIVERSAL AVENGERS

HYPERION

ODINSON

STARBRAND

NIGHTMASK

ABYSS

EX NIHILO

THE CABAL

NAMOR

THANOS

BLACK SWAN

TERRAX

MAXIMUS

PROXIMA MIDNIGHT

CORVUS GLAIVE

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NECROPOLIS.
WAKANDA.

"THE IVORY KINGS."

THE WHITE LORDS FROM WILD SPACE.

FROM OUT THERE...

FROM BEYOND...

BEYONDERS.

ARE YOU SURE THAT'S WHAT YOU FOUND OUT THERE, HANK?

SPOTTY AS THEY ARE, THIS DOESN'T LOOK ANYTHING AT ALL LIKE THE "BEYONDER" THAT WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED BEFORE...

AND THERE'S MORE THAN ONE.

YES... *MORE.*

DRILL DEEP ENOUGH INTO ANY PROBLEM AND YOU'LL FIND BOTH SIMPLICITY AND ELEGANCE. IDEAS ARE LIKE THAT AT THE CORE.

OF COURSE... OF *COURSE* THERE ARE... *MORE.*

ARE WE SURE WE SHOULD BE DOING THIS NOW? I THINK DOCTOR PYM MIGHT NEED TO REST BEF--

DON'T TRY AND HANDLE ME, SON...I CAN HEAR WHAT I SOUND LIKE.

BROKEN DOESN'T MEAN BENT, UNDERSTAND?

SHOW THEM, REED. THE DATA'S ALL RECORDED ON THE CRYSTAL I GAVE YOU.

SHOW THEM....

SEE? UNIVERSALLY ADAPTIVE. HARMONICALLY TRANSITIONAL.

THESE... THINGS CANNOT BE FULLY COMPREHENDED IN A HUMAN FASHION. I COULD TALK ABOUT SCALE, PERHAPS... THE SIZE OF IT...

I COULD TELL YOU ABOUT THE ***CHILD UNIT*** FROM THE ***SECRET WARS.*** VISUALLY MODIFIED TO MIMIC WHAT IT PERCEIVED...

IT CRUNCHED A ***UNIVERSE*** TO MAKE A TOY...BUT THESE THINGS CRUNCH ***UNIVERSES*** AND ARE MOST CERTAINLY NOT PLAYING A GAME.

REED AND TONY SENT ME TO FIND RABUM ALAL, BUT I FOUND SOMETHING WORSE. WHITE LORDS OF WILD SPACE, QUESTING FOR THE LAST LIGHT...

DO YOU UNDERSTAND IT NOW?

NOT ONE BIT, HANK.

START AT THE BEGINNING.

"OKAY. WELL, TO START WITH, THE PROBLEM OF FINDING WHAT I WAS LOOKING FOR WAS TWOFOLD.

"THE FIRST QUESTION I HAD TO ANSWER WAS HOW TO NAVIGATE THE MULTIVERSE.

"REED HAD THEORETICAL IDEAS AND SOME PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE, BUT DIVING THROUGH STACKED UNIVERSES LACKING A TRUE NORTH MAKES IT EASY TO GET LOST.

"INFINITE UNIVERSES MEANS INFINITE TIME, AND TIME WASN'T SOMETHING WE HAD.

"BUT IF YOU GET SMALL ENOUGH, YOU CAN DECIPHER THE STRANGE INTERACTIONS THAT OCCUR IN THE RAZOR-THIN SUBATOMIC SPACES THAT SEPARATE UNIVERSES.

"ROTATING PARTICLES DISAPPEAR AND REAPPEAR AND, FOR THE LONGEST TIME, NO ONE KNEW WHERE THEY WOULD GO, BUT I'LL TELL YOU:

"THEY TRADE PLACES WITH LIKE KIND. CONSTANTLY. SOMETHING AKIN TO AN ESCALATOR MOVING THROUGH REALITIES.

"SO NOW I COULD FIND MY WAY. I HAD MY TRUE NORTH.

"AS FOR THE ANSWER TO MY SECOND QUESTION--

"HOW DO I KNOW WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR...

"WITH THAT ONE, I HAD SOME HELP.

"IT TOOK ME ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-THREE DAYS OF TRAVELING FROM DOOMED TO DYING WORLDS...

"BUT I EVENTUALLY FOUND MY WAY TO THE SUPERSTATION OF REFUGEE ***BUILDERS*** FROM HUNDREDS OF DEAD UNIVERSES.

"THE PAN-UNIVERSAL ALEPHS, REDESIGNED AND REBUILT BY THE BUILDERS TO HIVE-MIND DATA FROM THOUSANDS OF UNITS, EACH ACTING AS A MULTIVERSAL BUOY.

"TRAWLING THE ENDLESS SEA OF SPACE AND TIME, LOOKING TO SNAG A CELESTIAL CLUE IN THEIR NET.

"I HITCHED A RIDE ON A REPORTING UNIT."

OBJECTIVE: TIME-SENSITIVE.

GOAL: SOURCE-SEEKING.

GOAL: ACHIEVED.

IS THAT SO?

ACTION: UPLOADING COORDINATES.

THAT WOULD BE WONDERFUL NEWS...

AS I GROW TIRED OF THIS SEARCHING AND AM EAGER TO CREATE THEIR UNCREATION.

MASTERS! THIS ALEPH SAYS THE HIVE HAS FOUND A SOURCE POINT.

AH! FINALLY.

RECALL ALL UNITS AND PREPARE THE SUPERSTATION FOR TRANSIT.

THE DATA SHOWS THE COORDINATES ARE FAR BEYOND ANY PREVIOUS JUMP.

WITH A WINDOW THIS SLIGHT, PERHAPS WE SHOULD--

I CAN MAKE IT.

THE ***NEED*** IS THERE...

SO I CAN MAKE THE JUMP.

WHAT?!

THERE WAS ANOTHER MANIFOLD? AND WHAT DID HE MEAN BY, "THE ***NEED*** IS THERE"?

ACCORDING TO WHAT I COULD FOLLOW FROM THE BUILDERS, ALL MANIFOLDS ARE PRIMAL MOVERS. TELEPORTERS WITH THE BASE ABILITY TO MOVE FROM POINT A TO POINT B...

BUT THEIR REAL VALUE IS IN THE HIGHER END OF THEIR POWER SET--THEY CAN MOVE THINGS ALMOST UNCONSCIOUSLY...

VARIABLE THINGS TO VARIABLE PLACES SOLELY BY ***NEED***. THEY SOMEHOW ***KNOW*** WHERE THINGS ARE SUPPOSED TO GO.

I HAD NO IDEA...BUT THAT EXPLAINS SO...

WAIT. FROM EVERYTHING ELSE I'VE LEARNED, OUR POWER ONLY WORKS IN OUR NATIVE UNIVERSE.

THE BUILDERS BUILT A NEW KIND OF MANIFOLD...

CULTIVATED AND GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FROM HUNDREDS OF... SAMPLES.

THIS ONE COULD TRAVERSE THE MULTIVERSE.

SO... A SCIENCE EXPERIMENT.

"YES. AND A SUCCESSFUL ONE AT THAT.

"THE MANIFOLD MOVED THE SUPERSTATION TO THE COORDINATES.

"AN INCURSION POINT WHERE THE SIDERA MARIS HAD SUMMONED MAPMAKERS.

"A MOMENTARY NEXUS OF REAL AND WILD SPACE...

"I WATCHED FROM THE SUPERSTATION AS ONE THOUSAND NIHILII JOINED WITH TEN THOUSAND ALEPHS TO PIERCE THE NEXUS AND DESTROY THE BULK OF THE MAPMAKERS AND THEIR SIDERA MARIS SLAVES.

"I WATCHED AS THEY SALVAGED A MAPMAKER CORE AND CRACKED THE HARMONIC STRUCTURE OF WILD SPACE.

"I WATCHED AS THEY DISCOVERED THE LOCATION OF THE IVORY KINGS THEMSELVES, AND THE MANUFACTURED MANIFOLD MADE THE JUMP."

THERE. THAT'S WHERE WE ***NEED*** TO GO.

I CAN FEEL IT.

AND IT WAS HIS LAST...

IT'S NOT MADNESS TO LOOK AT THINGS HIDDEN AND BELIEVE THEY SHOULDN'T BE FOUND.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, HANK?

HE'S SAYING THAT IF YOU TRULY WANT TO KEEP SOMETHING A SECRET, YOU DON'T DIG A SHALLOW GRAVE...

YOU BURY IT DEEP.

BRIAN. GOOD.

YOU'RE HERE.

YES. I CAME AS SOON AS SOON AS YOU SIGNALED HIS RETURN.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT HANK'S TALKING ABOUT?

HE'S SAYING THERE'S A REASON THAT AT ROUGHLY THE SAME TIME, EVERY SINGLE BEING CONNECTED TO THESE IVORY KINGS STARTED SHARING THE SAME FREQUENCY...

IT MADE IT EASIER TO FIND THEM IF YOU WERE REALLY LOOKING.

HE'S SAYING IT WAS A TRAP.

"FOUR MONTHS AGO, THE CAPTAIN BRITAIN CORPS BEGAN ACTIVELY INVESTIGATING THE COLLAPSE.

"WE KNEW SOMETHING WAS WRONG BEFORE THEN, BUT IT TOOK THE LOSS OF OVER TWENTY CORPSMEN IN A SINGLE WEEK TO TRULY GALVANIZE OUR EFFORTS.

"EVENTUALLY, WE CAPTURED A MAPMAKER AS WELL, BUT INSTEAD OF FOLLOWING THE HARMONICS, SATURNYNE HAD US CONSTRUCT A BEACON.

"THE IVORY KINGS SENT EVERYONE. THE STARLIGHT CITADEL WAS OVERRUN AND THE CORPS WAS DESTROYED IN A MATTER OF HOURS.

"I SHOULD HAVE DIED THERE, BUT AFTER EMBEDDING ME WITH THE CITADEL'S SECRETS, SATURNYNE CAST ME OUT...

"RETURNING ME TO THIS EARTH."

WE NEVER EVEN GLIMPSED AN IVORY KING OR WHATEVER IS BEHIND THIS. BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE, THESE THINGS ARE PREDATORS OF THE HIGHEST ORDER.

AND THEY WON'T STOP UNTIL THEY HAVE US IN THEIR MOUTHS.

OH, IT'S GRIMMER THAN THAT.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

WHILE I WAS OUT THERE WATCHING, THERE WAS A QUESTION RATTLING AROUND IN MY MIND.

I COULDN'T LET IT GO...

"IF THE BEYONDERS WERE SO POWERFUL--NOT CONSTRAINED BY SPACE, OR ENERGY, OR ANYTHING WITHIN REASON--AND IF THEY WANTED US DEAD...

"WHY HAD THEY NOT SIMPLY FINISHED OFF ALL OF US A LONG TIME AGO? WHAT WAS STOPPING THEM?

"WELL, IT TURNS OUT THE ANSWER WAS WORSE THAN THE QUESTION.

"THAT BAITED TRAP WE FOUND WASN'T MEANT FOR US AT ALL. THEY WERE AFTER BIGGER FISH.

"AND AS FOR WHY IT WAS TAKING AS LONG AS IT DID?

"TURNS OUT IT TAKES A GOOD BIT OF TIME TO KILL AN ENDLESS NUMBER OF GODS.

"WE JUMPED INTO THE NEXUS OF REAL AND WILD SPACE JUST IN TIME TO WATCH A SINGLE BEYONDER CONFRONTING THE LAST CELESTIALS OF THE UNIVERSE WE WERE CURRENTLY IN.

"BUT THE NEXUS WAS THIN SPACE.

"AND AS THEY BATTLED, WHAT DIVIDES ONE REALITY FROM THE NEXT BEGAN TO FADE."

AND LIKE BLURRED, OVERLAPPING VISION, I COULD SEE THE SAME BATTLE TAKING PLACE IN MULTIPLE REALITIES.

"IN EACH ONE, A DIFFERENT BEYONDER FACING...AND ***DESTROYING***...THE CELESTIAL HOST."

THAT EXPLAINS WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM. WHY THEY DISAPPEARED... AND STOPPED MEETING US...

YES. BUT THE ONLY CONCERN WITH THAT IS WE KNOW THAT THERE ARE THINGS A GOOD DEAL MORE POWERFUL THAN THE CELESTIALS ROAMING THE COSMOS.

TELL US WHAT ELSE YOU SAW, HANK.

THAT'S THE PROBLEM, T'CHALLA...

AT SOME POINT, THE MIND... THE MIND BECOMES INCAPABLE OF FULLY UNDERSTANDING WHAT IT'S OBSERVING...

"I WAITED... DRIFTING IN SPACE...

"AMONG THE LIFELESS BODIES OF THE BUILDERS SUSPENDED IN A ZERO-GRAVITY GRAVE...

"LIKE DROWNED ANTS FLOATING IN WATER.

"AND THEN I SAW...

"I'M NOT SURE ***SAW*** IS EVEN THE RIGHT WORD...

"BUT I SAW WHAT FOLLOWED...

"AND THAT ONE GLIMPSE CAUSED ME TO LET GO OF THE LOOSE GRIP I HAD ON MY REMAINING SANITY.

"I WENT MAD. LOST IN THE FIREWORKS OF UNIVERSAL GENOCIDE.

"AND I ONLY FOUND MY WAY BACK WHEN ETERNITY FRACTURED.

"SPACE FLATTENED BACK OUT.

"PERCEPTION BECAME POSSIBLE AGAIN.

"THE BEYONDERS TURNED, SOMETHING CATCHING THEIR ATTENTION.

"AND THEN I SAW...

"...WHAT THEY SAW.

"ALL OF REALITY-- THE ***MULTIVERSE***-- TAKEN FORM.

"THEY BATTLED. THEY RAGED.

"THE SAME FIGHT TAKING PLACE ACROSS ALL REALITIES AT THE SAME TIME.

"AND WHEN THE LIVING TRIBUNAL LIVED NO MORE, IT FELL FROM THE HEAVENS...

"AND LANDED ON A ROCK. ONE SLIVER EACH...FOR EACH REALITY.

"THEN I *RAN*, REED.

"I RAN AS HARD AND FAST AS I COULD. I RAN HERE TO TELL YOU..."

...IT'S *OVER*, MY FRIEND. DONE.

THE GODS SPENT BILLIONS OF YEARS TO BUILD SOMETHING... ALL OF THE MULTIVERSE...

AND THESE THINGS DESTROYED IT ON A WHIM.

WHAT HOPE DOES MAN HAVE NOW?

NEW AVENGERS

ZONE